

M1510
Monday, December 30, 1968
San Francisco
Group III

Mr Nyland: You don't like too much darkness, do you? So, this is what I call the third evening of the Group Threes—or the Group III—while I am here, and in combination with Group II because of the holidays. And the first meeting as you know, was an exploratory one, saying something about ordinary life, and indicating the need for Work. The second was a little bit more in detail and towards the end a description of what Work really means. So I promised that tonight I would answer questions; if possible regarding Work and any kind of effort you may have made, or again about what is the place of Work in one's life and why should one really wish to Work.

So if you have questions, you can ask. As we say, "Who is willing to put the bell on the cat?" You see, I don't like silence of course. If you don't ask questions I will have to talk. And it is not right when the emphasis is on you and not on me. I become secondary. You are primary if you want to ask questions which are based on a lack of information that you have now, or perhaps a curiosity which you would like to have satisfied. And my assumption is, particularly that we have already talked enough about the meaning of Work, that by this time you could ask questions about that, or you could ask questions about maybe your attempts, or whatever you might have read that was not clear.

And it's quite all right if you don't want to talk, because I can always talk. But the advantage of questions is an entirely different kind. Whenever one talks to a particular audience, there has to be a relationship. And if one talks just to a group of people, I do not know what you think. I can assume certain things by looking at you, or I can also say that there is a possibility

of certain vibrations as the atmosphere created by a Group and that if I'm sensitive enough about that then I can say, "Well, we ought to talk about this or that." But when there are questions, then at least there is one person who is sincere enough about wanting to have an answer to that question, and it immediately establishes a relationship between that person and myself. That it can become profitable for the rest depends entirely on the answer and the relating of the answer to other statements; and it can also be useful to you when you have a similar kind of a question and the other person simply happened to be the first one to ask it.

So for that reason I really insist more or less that you ask; because it's much better to have that kind of discussion. It won't go easily out of hand, because you will be limited in asking certain questions within a certain framework.

Yeah.

Questioner: You said that you ended your second meeting with a brief description of what Work really means. Perhaps a short summary of that would be helpful at this moment.

Mr Nyland: Oh, I think it is necessary to elaborate on it.

Questioner: It's necessary to elaborate?

Mr. Nyland: Yes. A short summary will not help. I really would like very much to explain what is Work.

Questioner: Well, I wasn't here at the second meeting, so I would very much like to know.

Mr. Nyland: Good. I'm sure there are others about that question. And one says, "Work on oneself," what is meant by 'oneself?' In the first place, of course, it is that what I am now. And with the reason for wanting to Work on myself, I must know that that what I am is not what I really would like to be. Otherwise I wouldn't want to do any Work. And therefore I have to be also quite clear, in the first place about what I really am, and in the second place of what I can expect.

[Aside: Is there no room to sit? I'm sorry. You can sit in the aisle or you can sit right here if you like. There are probably some seats somewhere. Only, don't sit on the piano.]

So then the question is: Do I know what I really am? Because if I know what I am, there is a chance to talk about what I would like to become. So that what I know what I am and what I know in ordinary life about myself, the question then is: Is that reliable? And I think I explained about that last time—that that what one usually considers oneself to be is not always truthful. Because many times I remember certain things about myself which, even with my ordinary

conscience, I really don't like or are not fitting in society; or even, if I want to use that kind of a term, it's not 'becoming' to a Man as he lives even on Earth, and that therefore, when I want to have certain facts about myself on which I want to build a possibility of further growth, that then I must be quite sure that I know that that what I am is really so, and is not going to change in the next five or ten years.

So this brings us to the question of: How do I collect facts about myself that I can rely on and that even, for myself as well as for other people, could become permanent enough to form a foundation for that what I wish to build? This brings us of course to the question of how to acquire facts about myself which are truthful. And about that one has to think a little bit, because if I consider myself as I am in ordinary life, I can have an opinion about what I have done, and more or less judge it in accordance with certain rules by which I have been educated; and if I don't want to use such rules because I think that they are too conservative, there is something in me nevertheless that starts to judge my particular behavior in relation to other people or in relation to the rules as set up by the present civilization in which I happen to live, and that my attitude then either has to conform, or it has to rebel against such conditions simply because I don't like them.

Now the question of liking may be based on not knowing exactly what the conditions are, or it may be based on something that I am in which, in my rather limited experience, I simply have an opinion of certain things I do not approve of, basing it simply on the fact that they are my own experiences. And I think in order to become a little bit clearer about that, I will always leave open the possibility that perhaps I do not know and not immediately go to a judgment so that I then become committed to that kind of a judgment. So if one only wanted to preface it with, "In my opinion it is such-and-such," then usually the impression that I have of the outside world will have to be based on a personal element which is myself, and of course that is based on what I am and how I have grown up to what I am at the present time.

In a very general way, one says that whenever one wants to look at oneself and in recalling certain thoughts or feelings I have had or even certain actions I have taken, I always will have a tendency to put it in a better light than what they are. That, you can say, is a statement you might question, but I think that if you are honest with yourself you know well enough for yourself that whenever you happen to relate something to someone else and that what you are really a little ashamed of and you would have to tell it, that you will try to say it in such a way that you are not

too much hurt and that the other will not change his opinion about you and that you will really try to get as good an opinion as you possibly can get from anyone else in order to have what you might call a certain 'self-satisfaction.'

It is very questionable if one actually wants to have the truth for oneself, particularly when certain things are done in ignorance for which you perhaps were responsible; and perhaps not, but in any event it was a form of your behavior and it belongs to you, and when you look at yourself in that way of saying, "That what I am, maybe it is not so good, but....," and you start then to explain and rationalize and explain the conditioning under which you have lived and the different reasons which have made you the way you are—and blaming your father and mother and the circumstances under which you have lived—you really avoid the issue of coming to a truthful statement about yourself.

I think on that particular point we have to be very clear; because if you still assume that that what you are is not so bad and that you think that if just by living a little longer you will have more experience and then gradually straighten out the difficulties which may be at the present time in your life, then of course this kind of Work is not needed. Because you already are sufficiently satisfied to leave it alone and you don't want to think about it too much; and if there is anything that is not so nice, you hope in the future that it will change, I would say, almost 'automatically,' or simply by the fact that you happen to live a little longer and acquire more maturity.

I say we have to be 'very clear' about that part, because it is a basis of a wish to Work. Because if I know that that what I am, and many times regarding myself—not about other people, but about myself—that I want to put myself in the best light possible, I think it's a very good human characteristic but it is not very useful when it is not really so, and if I start to build on that, the foundation becomes a little shaky; because if afterwards I discover facts which could become explanatory for my behavior at the present time, that then I will start to think differently about myself; and when that changes, that is really the foundation on which I have built, then of course the building is liable to crack.

Now the question is: Can I actually obtain that kind of information, and is it necessary for me to have it really in that way? That is quite problematical; that perhaps absolute facts are not needed for a Man when he lives on Earth. So this brings up an entirely different question: What is really the expectancy of a Man on Earth when he finds himself born and sufficiently mature to

think about such questions? And if one then is interested in making the best of oneself as far as Earth is concerned and to live out one's life the way it has been indicated, and the way I will go because that what I am now most likely will continue in a similar way and when I grow up I gradually will acquire certain characteristics which become my own, and when there is no particular reason to change it, I can more or less predict how I will be in the future—unless, of course, there are certain unforeseen circumstances which may change my whole life; but in all probability, even if they do come, I will rationalize about it enough, because that what I am I really care for, and at times I even love a little too much.

So these questions have to be related in a little different kind of perspective, because if one is only interested in life here, and I would not say in 'life hereafter' but in the possibility that Man, besides being just a person made up of matter as we know it of physical appearance, that perhaps there is other something in him that is also of value. And the more I think about that, when I consider such questions, is that really that what counts is my essential life, or sometimes called one's 'inner' existence, and sometimes a spiritual form of something that is not as tangible as ordinary matter is. And when I consider my feelings and also sometimes the mind processes in the form of thoughts, and I cannot immediately express them in the terminology of matter—that is, they need not immediately go over into any kind of an activity—that then I would consider, if I really become a little bit more honest, that when Man is made up of two possibilities, that that he is as a physical body, having reached its own growth and is at the end of it, that there is still something that could be explored further and is then of a different kind of quality; and I call it simply a 'feeling' that I have which, of course, I sometimes can consider as emotions, and also thought processes which really could give me at times a certain insight in myself.

That brings up the question of: What is Man really on Earth? Is he made up of two parts of that kind—one material; and the other a little less material, or perhaps ethereal or spiritual—and is his life expressed in both, and is his life something that now appears in this human form, and would there be a possibility of considering life separate from that what is the form? And this is a big question, because we are so used to consider the form as a matter of one's life, simply because life expresses itself through the manifestation of a person; and for that reason, I say that these manifestations belonging to Man are really his life. And it becomes even worse when I take my feelings and I know that the expression of my feelings are bound up with the expression

of my physical appearance and that my feeling by itself has really no chance to exist unless it can be expressed through a material form. The thinking, it's a little different because I can have concepts in my mind which need not take on any particular form; but as soon as I want to use them in any way whatsoever, I will try to formulate them or at least put them in words, and in particular I want to have thoughts when I want to communicate them to other people, which are then put in words and in a language that can be understood by those I want to communicate with.

So, you see, I'm really a little bit up against it if, now, in the appearance which I am as a human being, I try to separate life from the form. And the difficulty is always that our education is based entirely on the appearance and the form, and very seldom on the possible spiritual development.

Now, of course one can have at certain times experiences which indicate that there is something else besides matter. And it doesn't matter if one wants to call it either an expression of creation of that what is in your mind and you want to create in a form, or that what one feels and then in relation to other people also expressed as something existing which then takes on a form in order to formulate it. When I say I 'hate' or I 'love' or I have 'jealousy' or kind of feelings which are either vices or virtues—it doesn't matter—when I express joy there is something in me that is at that moment active within. And if I say that I do not wish to express it, then I definitely make a distinction between a state which exists which does not have to be expressed ... and I think it's obvious to assume that life is actually in me, because I know when there is something that is form and there is no life, I call it 'dead.' So then if one can agree that Man is made up of at least two different kinds which, of course, are related to each other because they need each other for further expression and for behavior forms in this life, then the question is: How permanent is this life? And then philosophically, again: Where did it come from and where will it go after the physical body dies?

I think a person who is interested in the ideas of Gurdjieff has to realize that it is much more than what Man appears to be as you look at him, and that really one becomes more interested in that what is the inner motivations of one ... of a person instead of just what he says or even does, or what he happens to think about and the distinction that one makes for oneself. Many times when I look at my own behavior, then I say to myself when I am closed up in my inner chamber and no one has to hear it—or when I even would pray about myself when it is only meant for God—that then perhaps I'm a little more honest; and that what I call then the

'appearance' I will explain, when it is not so lovely, that that is really not my reason for doing it but I was forced under certain circumstances that I had to behave in a certain way. And to a certain extent we can get away with it in ordinary life very well; and even if I say I am a little hypocritical but it doesn't matter because everybody else is, or when I say that someone is praising me and I let it go although I know it is not really the truth. But it satisfies me. When I'm stroked in the right way, of course I purr. And when it is against the grain I don't like it and I say so at times; and sometimes I don't dare to say it because politeness requires me to behave in a certain way, and when I let myself go I may not be liked. And when I get drunk and then behave as I really am essentially, then of course I know if someone else describes my behavior, I probably feel a little ashamed.

I think we have to be clear about these particular questions, that Man as he is born on Earth is a form of life appearing in a human form, exactly the same as an animal is in an animal form and a plant is in a plant form; and that all of it is a representation of life on Earth. And I don't think there is any particular difficulty about that, but the difficulty comes if I want to be satisfied with an idea that life starts when I was born or conceived, and that that life dies when I die physically. That, I think, is a question one has to consider, because for me it is a very illogical assumption that everything dies when I die. In particular, when during my lifetime I have a certain responsibility for my life and I feel that I ought to work, even in ordinary life, in order to become a good kind of a Man—kind and helpful and perhaps intelligent and if possible brilliant, or to produce certain things for people of the next generation to which my name remains attached, and that in general when I would like to improve myself and become then grown up, and having experienced a variety of impressions, which of course I have received within me and I have digested—that then it is a little strange to assume that when I die that all of that is completely lost. I mean the assumption of course is quite possible, but it does not leave any particular explanation which has any rhyme or reason.

Because it is not reasonable to assume that everything dies when I die. Naturally, when it happens to me it would happen to everybody. And that only life, you might say, is 'maintained' because of the birth of new people all the time—every second—and although they then die, there is a continuation of life on Earth. Also that is not a very satisfactory explanation for a person himself, because he doesn't care very much that someone else continues to live or lives for him. He becomes interested in his own life, and that naturally explains that when I'm threatened by

something, that I wish to protect my life and that when I'm in normal conditions and I grow up, that I have interest in that what is my life, to prolong it as much as I can in order to do certain things for myself—and partly enjoyment, partly avoiding difficulties, and partly for wishing to continue to acquire more knowledge or feeling or to produce certain things which have value for me, and sometimes I say in an act of creation that I would like to 'pour' into it my life and what I am.

The question always comes up: What do I do it for and why should I then, on that kind of a basis, particularly when life is not so easy, continue with life, and why shouldn't I logically want to end it as soon as possible. Because there are times I don't want to take the responsibility for it. That of course is an unfortunate state; and at the same time, I cannot get away with it because I happen to be on Earth without my desire, or without having an aim to do anything about it. And, I produce exactly the same kind of forms when I have children and to what extent am I, now, responsible for the creation of life in a new form when I myself am dissatisfied with the life as it is, and therefore why should I take a responsibility for something I really don't want.

You see, these considerations become quite topsy-turvy. Because either I wish to continue to live or I don't, and that is really the only answer: And when we talk about the possibility of evolution, we have to be quite clear that I wish to live; and also that that what is life for me, and if there is a possibility of evolving, that that life continues to exist even if my physical body would die. It's a very simple assumption. And of course it is quite logical to assume it, and it is certainly in line with the general atmosphere of religions as they have been in existence, and it is in line with the possibility of any kind of a spiritual world in which certain departed Souls will still continue to live, and all the rest of whatever you want to describe of a possibility of contact with such a life; or for myself that I wish to continue in my life the way I now live, even if I try to improve it, that at least I will not be cut off when I happen to die as far as my physical body is concerned.

But the assumption must be—and I say it is quite logical—that life exists in me and has a certain permanency. Again, that question of permanency of life; I think it is also quite logical, because I only know one thing: that is, life; I do know about the absence of life—I call it 'dead'—but it is, of course, since that what is then dead is not enlivened by life. And the creation of life as it is now, from conception on until death, is something that apparently existed before; and in some way or other, any kind of a biological influence or influences from

heredity—of that what comes from father and mother or from grandfather and grandmother, et cetera et cetera—represents now in me a certain way by which this life takes on characteristics which in all probability do not belong to me but belong to that out of which I was born. Aside from the fact of course that when that starts as a young child, that then there are other influences which will form him, and that of course when I consider the possibilities of the permanency of my life, that then my life as form starts to play a part ... and particularly when I'm interested in making it as well as I can, that I would like to continue with this life; because I cannot always create something into which I pour life; somehow or other if I do that, something goes out from me, and although it is mine it is not within my possession any longer. So I think the question of possessiveness of life or the responsibility for my life that I have, is a very necessary assumption if I want to continue to Work on myself for the sake of evolving.

There is another thing that I cannot avoid, which is responsibility. Like it or not, I am constantly under the influence of certain things which have been laid on me, partly because of the way I was growing up and partly because I have a certain amount of, let's call it, a 'wish' of myself and perhaps at times a 'will,' but in any event something for which I personally became responsible, because I did do this or that to myself or to someone else. And avoiding the responsibilities of that kind of course is a great game, because one wants to get away with the least amount of effort in order to settle such questions; and for what reason I do not know—than only that I feel that sometimes the responsibility is too much, then I prefer to be lazy.

I think one also has to assume that a person who wishes to continue to live is willing to pay for it. Because if that doesn't exist, then of course my attitude towards the maintenance of life becomes entirely dependent on how much I'm willing to pay; and if I can live, then, very naturally in an easy chair and have everything done for me, then from the standpoint of us—that is, from the standpoint of the persons who are interested in Gurdjieff—it is really that such a Man is not even answering to the ordinary affairs of ordinary life, so ... let alone for the possibility of the further development.

So all of this brings up the whole point that it is something that I must know about myself which is really the right thing to know and the only thing to know, and that there is no question about it. And that, of course, enforces many other different things and I've talked about, some of them a few weeks or so ago: the question of the difference between my mind and my feelings and the conflict there many times is about my behavior; or that what I should do and I do not

know what to do, and sometimes the strongest wins and then I get caught.

But whichever way it is, Man is what he is now, representing a form of life on Earth with the assumption that something ought to be done to continue his life after his physical death. That is a premise. The question now is: What is there as life that I can consider my own? Because if during my lifetime now I would like to remain identified with what I am, and on Earth or in this world I am interested in a certain amount of admiration or even respect, that then I assume that there is something of me which is worthwhile; and that therefore the form of life which I now have in this body ought to remain that kind of something for me, belonging to me—even if possible, carrying my name—into a spiritual world. And without now assuming further that if such a spirit could exist and may have to return to Earth and be reincarnated, or that it could exist on a spiritual level for different other purposes, or that there is no end in the evolution of Man, or that what is life for Man now can be compared to that what is life anywhere else in the totality of the ‘universe,’ simply to use a very big word—it simply means that I become interested in that what I am, and I hope then that when I die there is something of me still in existence which can continue to exist.

I think this is simply an extension of what I feel in ordinary life on Earth: that I want to protect this life. And for that, I have a definite reason when I’m identified with it and I consider it my own as if it is given to me for a very definite purpose, and that that purpose becomes clear to me when I live on Earth and I’m faced, in the first place, with the possibility of being destroyed; in the second place, with the possibility of that what I am now to develop it. And it is therefore quite right that I assume that it could exist after I die, and perhaps can exist for a variety of different forms of life at different kinds of levels.

If one wants to go into that further in detail about a religious or a certain philosophical aspect of these things which border on the cosmological ones, then of course one can think and think and philosophize from now until doomsday. One is interested in something that becomes quite practical for oneself, as one has to face conditions as the Earth—and life, and Mother Nature—present to one. And the relationships with different people naturally affect me the same way as they would affect others, and that the responsibility extends to become that what I should be as a Man on this planet, on this Earth.

This involves, then, the question of what is really a Man. And the definition, as far as Gurdjieff is concerned, is really that a Man ought to be able to do in any kind of a condition

whatever is required; with an ability of which he is capable, and understanding the situations in such a way that that what is needed is actually being done by him. It presupposes a great deal of that Man being under any kind of situation—anything that is necessary to be done—to understand what the situation requires. And it is rather a very strange kind of idea to define a Man in that sense, but if you keep on thinking about it, it is really what one considers ‘character,’ or a trait of someone who is really reliable, who is honest and can be depended on and who would then in his lifetime have a chance, if he so wished, to affect other people in order to encourage them to continue in their life and to help them to the extent that perhaps at certain times he can alleviate the conditions under which they live.

This, I think, has to be an aim which gradually can become much clearer. But it involves that one is now, in this life, at a certain place and then, what is it that I must do at the present time. In the first place, it is necessary to know what I am and to have about that facts which are completely truthful without any question. In the second place, I have to have an aim of what I wish to become. Now, about that we’ve talked a little bit now; because if I believe that life can continue to exist after death—physical death—then the continuation of my life should be in a certain form, and such forms for me should mean progress towards that what could be the ultimate aim.

What could be an ultimate aim for Man if he considers his life the way it is now, and if he is responsible for his life as he finds it? Again, it’s a philosophical question, and perhaps not always to be defined in the same way for different people. And perhaps also it involves a certain question: Does one assume that the universe is actually regulated in accordance with a certain form of science, or in accordance with certain rules or laws about which we know perhaps very little, but nevertheless it indicates a certain intelligence of a higher nature? I think we have to be very clear about that point too, because if you don’t assume that certain forces exist which are higher than we are and which we, for the time being, can call ‘spirits,’ and if you want to concentrate that into an idea and call it ‘God’ or ‘His Endlessness,’ that there is quite definitely a reason for existence of this Earth in combination with the reasons of creation of all the different stars and constellations about which we know a little, and perhaps we know much less than we really think.

But the question is: If I am part of Mankind on Earth and if I find myself with life as it is now, to what extent now do I believe that this life that I represent is the same as all life? Again

that's a philosophical question, because I don't know what is life on other planets if it exists, and I don't know what is life in general. I can say, "It is something that is alive or that moves." I can also say, "that what is not dead." I can also ascribe to it all different kind of different things in ordinary life which I call 'ambition,' or 'inspiration,' or 'aspiration' towards certain things or the expression of certain, perhaps, virtues—that I say, "and I love so-and-so"; it is a form of life when I wish to give, like I wish to give birth to someone when I wish a child.

All of these things have to do with life as essential quality in different kinds of forms. And again, for the sake of an argument I must assume that life in the first place is endless and that it is always uniform; because the trouble: as soon as I start to define it in any other way, I run into the difficulty of having to assume a form. And when I say time is, now, an indication of a direction of something moving in a 'time-length,' and I link it up with an object that is moving in space; and that when I understand dimensions well enough when I say there are three of space and three of time and then there is nothing, and that what is the fourth so-called 'dimension' is really the first dimension of time when I call that the fourth dimension of space; that then the freedom from such dimensions could give me a point in which no dimensional space or time exists, and this still could be for me a form—although a point does not represent a form, but an entity of a certain kind in which life happens to be. And that therefore I'm perfectly right in assuming that such points of life force are all the same, and I can also assume that when there is no dimension that there is no separation. And then I approach life from the standpoint of the difference between Infinity and finite forms, and then I come quite close to the assumption of all life existing regardless of form, and that forms only exist at times when I can say that life 'crystallizes out' in a form or is poured into a form by certain other laws about which I have no particular control, but nevertheless there is a possibility that in my life I come to a point where I can say, "This is me in reality."

And now it looks as if we are very far from that what is Work on oneself. But you see, this kind of illustration is necessary to indicate that there is a reason for wanting to Work and the explanation, now, as far as Work is concerned—that is, I have to accept myself, what I am now. I have to eliminate the possibilities of growing in this life to the point of freedom. Because, you see, if I remain on Earth I will never be free from myself. I can become more and more acquainted with myself and I can become more and more—you might say less and less—interested in what I am. I can also reduce my particular interest and I can make my world

smaller. And in general of course this happens when I grow older, but I still have to face the particular fact that whatever it is that I now represent on Earth remains for me within the possibilities and the limits of Earth and what Mother Nature gives me: a certain subjectivity where I cannot get free from.

side 2 Perhaps it is very difficult to assume this; because I don't want to believe it and I believe that if I just keep on hammering on my maturity, that ultimately I will become free. This has to be based on your own experience even in the limited lifetime that you may have lived; but you try to find out for yourself to what extent you are free from yourself, and the answer is: You are not. And it is even worse. You are much more identified with yourself than when you were young; and it is simply because you love yourself and you don't want to give it up, and you believe that it is necessary for you to have yourself as it is and you don't want to have any separation take place—that is, you don't even wish to separate your life from the form in which it happens to be. Because that's an extremely difficult question to answer—to what extent am I willing to live my life without my body—and even if I say I would like to live it in an emotional state or in a pure intellectual one, I have no desire to get rid of my body as it is because I say if that isn't there I'm not 'on Earth' anymore, and I don't want to take a chance of where I am going.

Work on myself means that I have to become free from the manifestations of my body in order to expect the same kind of freedom that I would have when life is set free when my physical body dies. You see, this is the aim. It is quite apparent that all men die, and they must die for a certain reason. The assumption for us is that he dies for the reason to set his life free, and that life is placed in Man for a definite purpose to help, I call it now, 'purify' his life. Whatever other reasons there may be and which can be explained cosmologically more or less, and the fact that life exists on Earth and that Earth happens to be at a certain place in the universe and whatever other philosophy I want to adhere to, the fact still remains for me that that what is life now is set free when the physical body dies, and that apparently is the first step of my experience about which there is no question.

So then when I say I want to be 'free,' I mean by that, I want to be free from the bondage under which I now happen to live. And the bondage of myself is represented by the manifestations to which I am attached, and the identification which is constantly between my life and the form in which I happen to live. And that when I think about this in my mind—of how to

try to come to that kind of a condition of freedom—I have to consider in the first place, how can I be free from that what is my body and its wishes? How can I be free from the thoughts which I have, which I like and sometimes admire? And how can I be free from any kind of a feeling, particularly when it goes over into an emotional state and ends up in the creation of a form of art, or even in religion—that that what I wish in religion to find is a form of some kind in which I, perhaps mystically inclined, would like to fuse with the existence of His Endlessness or my God, or Infinity—and that all that will lead ultimately to a losing of myself in that totality of all things for which, I think, Man on Earth is not yet ready; and that he would like to remain responsible for his life so that finally if it ever would come to that particular problem, he could ask God to take his life because he has used it for the purpose it was given to him.

There is very definitely a reason why Man is alive on Earth; and that one of the reasons for him is to find out what is the reason for his existence now, and what is required in this life for him to do. And that if I know that I will die, should I do it now as fast as I can, or should I wait until it happens automatically because of an increase in maturity. A lifetime for Man at the present is a little short to do all these things; and particularly because when we are living now and nothing is said, really, about that kind of an education and that one has to find it oneself, one is very often on the wrong road; and time goes by and one becomes older and older, and after some time you realize that the many detours have simply taken up your time and that the end is coming nearer and nearer.

There are many ways of describing this kind of a state, and sometimes when one is young one is not particularly interested in it, because life is still ahead and one is under the assumption that it will last forever, and if one talks and thinks a little bit about death, one becomes too morose for society. At the same time, when you're by yourself, you will consider it because you have to consider your life and what to do with it. And therefore you don't want to make too many mistakes, and you don't want to go on certain roads where there is a possibility of destroying something of that what is now your form so that you become less capable of actually using it.

The question, then, if freedom is indicated by freedom from the physical body, that what is needed to learn in this life is how to become Objective. You see, this is saying the same as freedom, because freedom is from subjectivity, and therefore 'Objectivity' is the term to be used for that kind of freedom. And I wish now that during this particular period of life, I can acquire

enough dexterity so that something in me starts to exist which is free from myself. That is really the assumption, that I want to have something that is already free. And when I look at myself as a subjective entity, I say, "Where in hell's name can that come from; because I am a hundred percent subjective, how can anything be born in me that is Objective?" And of course that is true. Because in ordinary life, and in most cases, a person cannot be interested in this kind of Work and there are really very few who could; and they have to be particularly interested in the fact that life exists in them for a certain purpose and that there have been in their lifetime certain moments which were different from their regular subjective existence.

I think it is a requirement that one knows at certain times, and certain moments of experience are indicated in one's life which have a characteristic of Objectivity; and if one hasn't got that, one is constantly 'asleep' in our terminology. But the moments when I experience something, and I call it 'out of this world,' it indicates that there is something there that I then was not asleep in this world, but that something happened to me without any reason or without any ability to explain it. Nevertheless, I experienced it, and this I consider a very fortunate fact. And it can be explained why it happens with Man and not with a plant or an animal, because we say that Man is a 'three-fold' being—not only the two-foldness that we spoke about between matter and spirit, but that what is Man as three centers, and that for that reason this three-centeredness has a possibility of becoming One, simply because there are three and not two. An animal is only two-centered totally, and a plant is only one-centered.

For Man, then, there is the possibility that the three becoming One will give him at certain times an insight of freedom in the midst of his subjectivity. And that the rules, many times expressed in the doctrine of religion, is to find that kind of peace, or sometimes to find that what is 'beyond all activity in the midst of action'—I quoted that; it comes from Vedanta philosophy—and that what really is the essence ... essence of Man, of that what he really is in his inner chamber, of that what is really the reality of his life as a point, of that what really he is in his essential Being; and we say, that what he is in his 'Magnetic Center,' that's the source of his life from which his life started, or where his life entered into his existence. So now the question: If I become interested in the maintenance of that life and if I see that that life has multiplied by, you might say, 'dividing' itself and putting itself in different forms of different cells of the human body, that something somewhere in this human body recalls the state of what life was when it was free; and it is that that starts in Man a certain wish for the creation of something that

will help him to set him free ultimately, even if the totality of himself is practically a hundred percent subjective.

And it is these kind of experiences and the realization of that what I really am at certain times—sometimes under an influence of a shock, sometimes as a result of a deep continued thought process, of that what one wishes at all costs to reach at certain times when one is as much by oneself and as much in silence as one dares to allow; or that sometimes as a result of suffering, or sometimes as a result of certain combinations in life—that all of a sudden something becomes clear to one and religiously that one says at that time God happens to ‘speak’ to me, or it is that what is within me which actually wishes to be free.

So the assumption, now, again is that in Man there is one little potentiality, and that is a potentiality for becoming Objective or free. And the fact that I dare to think about freedom and that I dare to think about Infinity or that I dare to say ‘His Endlessness’—which means without end—that means that Man has in his mind and very definitely in the depths of his heart either a thought or a feeling which indicates that, for him, that there is a chance to become free if he only knew how.

For that one says, one ‘Works.’ One Works now in order to accumulate within themselves certain facts which are irrefutable and always dependable. That is the purpose. One wishes to Work in order to create something that can be of help and a guide to a person as he is now in his unconscious state. And you might say that that what I wish to create, I give it the power to Wake me Up. I wish in prayer to have from God an assurance that He will help me when I need it, and that He will be there whenever I call on Him. I want, in a religion or in any kind of a life philosophy, to have something which is always present when I call on it and when I honestly wish it. I don’t want to wait until conditions are more conducive, and I don’t want to have to go to a church. I don’t want to sit and meditate and exclude myself from the rest of the world. I want to be able to find something that I can do in the midst of my daily life. And of course I don’t want to be foolish that I can expect that I can have that kind of an attitude even to wish to create something in the midst of certain activities which take up all of my energy, or when my mind is full of worries and my heart is too full of joy.

Certain things, of course, have to create certain conditions, and when I now start to wish to create something, I now wish with the depth of my wish, as deep as that wish can be and as honest as it can be; and remembering that what I could be if I remembered enough about the state

of Objectivity which happened to me by chance, that I then say, "I wish to Work." I create then, to the best of my ability, something. I call it an 'I', and it is in the image of that what is God for me so that then at any one time if it could exist, I could pray to it and then it will help me.

One cannot get away from religious thoughts and feelings in this system of Gurdjieff. It is not a question of just a little intellectualism, of something that is very nice to look at. Either one does this kind of Work with an honest wish to actually grow and develop something, or one remains on the surface of a little bit of enjoyment regarding some cosmological ideas and principles. A Man must be taken by this Work, and Work will take him. A Man must wish to Work on himself for the sake of the creation of something which will help him to grow, and a Man must be convinced that he is not as yet full grown. A Man must know that on Earth there is no chance to develop unless one knows how to develop, that the fulfillment of Man is not in a refinement of what he has, but that what is needed is the introduction of the concept of freedom, which at the present time he does not experience. And for that reason, I say the difference between subjectivity and Objectivity is exactly freedom, and I happen to be inbetween the two and even if I start to Work, I am most of the time still in my subjective state.

So now the principle is this: I try to create something I call an 'I'. Even if it is still ninety nine percent subjective, it has already in it something of me—as well as I can make it as Objective and Objectively functioning regarding myself—and I wish this 'I' to receive certain impressions of me as I am. The point is now that what I am, I don't care to describe it and I don't care to judge it. I'm interested in life, and that what I am as life, even in the form in which I am, I don't want to have any liking for it. I only want to know that it exists. Because when I feed this kind of life-impression to the 'I', my 'I' will become reality because my life is reality. This is the reason why this so-called every once in a while one says: 'as-if' it exists, almost immediately when it starts to function changes over into a condition of reality. 'I' becomes then, for me, something like an entity functioning now in what we say, 'Observing' myself.

The Observation process is a recording of certain facts in this 'I', a mental operation, and the 'I' becomes mental; that is, it is a mental function which, when it receives impressions, I call it an 'Awareness' of 'I' in order to distinguish it from a thought process. Don't mistake this kind of Work with thinking or feeling. Awareness is mental, but it is not thought. The freedom from thought and the freedom from feeling is needed for the purity of 'I' functioning.

This is for the beginning. What it will lead to and what it will have to do afterwards is an

entirely different question. It's the same as when I learn scales on the piano. It's an entirely different question that afterwards I can play Beethoven. I have to go through that kind of practice of scales and dexterity of my fingers. The reason for wanting to Work on myself is very simple—that I have to acquire something I don't know anything about, and I do not know even what Objectivity is. And I start out with such terribly poor equipment that it will take me a long time even to refine the equipment itself, let alone to find a place for the facts which become absolute for me, and to put them in the proper sequence or in the proper relation to other facts.

The question now is, how can 'I' operate? I wish it to exist. I wish to endow it with that kind of a power: To Observe me. That what I now consider as myself—that is, my personality—remains all throughout this process unconscious. That what I wish my 'I' to be, I call 'Conscious' because it is Objective and it records pure intellectual facts. That means that the intellect at such a time is not interfered with with any form of either a like or dislike from my feeling center, or even from the different ways of thinking as exemplified by classifications or rationalization process or, in general, associative forms. It is pure—an intellectual recording as such—and it will give me then a fact which is truthful.

It depends, now, that this Observation has to accept myself as I am, and that is a difficulty. Because I still have my ordinary mind, and when I become engaged in the process of wishing to Work on myself, my ordinary mind will constantly tell me how to do it. The separation has to be very clear, and it will take a long time before there is clarity. In the beginning it's muddled, and it will be mixed up and it will be difficult. But there is an initial curiosity which can help one to try to find out, and one has to look at this kind of Work on oneself as a possible adventure of really establishing for oneself an experience which I have never had and which can only be compared with that what is a moment you have never forgotten, when it happened to be an Objective experience for yourself.

The detail which is necessary for a more perfect functioning of the 'I' now Observing is of course obvious: When I want to exclude feeling, it has to be Impartial; and when I want to exclude any thought process, it has to be Simultaneous to the ... to that what happens—the recording at the time when it actually happened.

One can go into further explanations why it should be Impartial. I would have cold facts. I want to have that what is Objective towards me, I want to find out what I really am. For that I don't want any interpretations of my own. When I say 'Simultaneous,' it means the exclusion of

that what is a thought form of myself with which I am familiar, which is living in the future or the past. And that what is the present, which is the moment at which that what changes the future into the past can be at that moment arrested and then recorded at that moment for the fact—what I am at that moment—and then when such a fact reaches this ‘I’ which as a mental function represents knowledge, it is then taken in by the rest of the brain in exactly the same way as any other fact that reaches me through my ordinary sense organs, and then it becomes a memory. And then in my memory are two kinds of facts really; one is a fact reaching me through a subjective channel, and the other is a fact reaching me through an Objective channel. When I consider afterwards with myself in thinking and I recall, I will prefer the Objective facts, because they are the only ones which are reliable.

Again, this process you could verify for yourself if you’re really interested in the truth. It does require honesty on the part of oneself. The reason why I Observe manifestations of the physical body is simply because in the physical body, if there is this form as expressed as manifestation, it’s a little easier to realize there is life behind it. But the real reason is that I don’t want to become Impartial to something that is completely partial, which is my feeling center; and that what is my mind, I have a great difficulty of becoming Impartial to a mind itself when the mind is full of associations.

So it’s only a stepping stone in order to acquire a dexterity. When once the dexterity is there, there are two possibilities. Assuming that ‘I’ exists and is now able to Observe, it can Observe the totality of myself exactly the same way as it now Observes certain forms of manifestations. In that would be included the workings of my unconscious state, and gradually with this kind of Observation, that what is ‘I’ could acquire knowledge of truth about myself—as soon as the ‘I’ is sufficiently grown up to stand by itself and not be disturbed by the surrounding or even the object that it would have to Observe. The second possibility is that when I see manifestations as a result of a thought or a feeling, that when I become Objective regarding the manifestations, it is not so difficult to become Objective regarding the source which has caused the manifestation to be what it is. It also again depends upon the strength of ‘I’, and when that is strong enough it will be able to be in the presence of a manifestation and the totality of such manifestation as where it comes from, to remain Objective about that and to translate at such a time the manifestation into the cause of it. This way I reach an Impartiality towards my feeling center or towards my mind.

In a very general way, this kind of acquisition of knowledge about myself will be placed in myself first in my memory. But when afterwards the 'I' has grown up sufficiently—and it is of course subject again to this same kind of 'growth' expressed by me, when I want to use terms which belong to the Earth, that it has reached its own maturity—that then the separation has been long enough separated and that then the requirement for 'I' is to 'return,' as it were, to Earth, meaning by that, my body being Earth and my feelings being the planets and my mind being the Sun, that what is formed comes now from the Sun to Earth to really help with its own Objectivity, as 'I', to correct the conditions of my physical existence. This process we also consider as a possibility of joining 'I' with 'It', and in that process of Participating in the activities of one's life in the form with which we are familiar and which we call the 'unconscious' form of the expression of one's life, that then there is a possibility of a change. Because if 'I' represents for me light and insight, that what is light in the presence of what is unconscious will have an effect on the unconscious state and gradually change it into a condition of light.

There are many more conditions or thoughts or relationships of course connected with this. Because one does not live by Consciousness alone. A Man is made up of feelings of a great kind, and that what refers to him as a 'feeling' very often could become a decisive factor in knowing what to do. And for that reason, when the feeling is not entirely pure and is still too subjective and too much bound up with the expression of one's feeling in one's body as manifestation, that then it is necessary to develop something that can help to guide the light of Consciousness through one's life. This we call a 'Conscience.' And the development of that what takes place when a Man tries to become Conscious, it means that his 'I' becomes a Conscious entity for him and starts to light up his unconscious state; and that the return of 'I' to himself as Earth or his body, and to help to correct conditions of this Earth body into that what it should become, that what 'I' then represents is a wish to make good what originally created 'I', and this particular attribute of 'I' we call 'Benevolence': it returns to myself in order to help me as I am.

This kind of wish on the part of 'I' to help me—that is, to change me from personality into what I really should become, or to help me to develop within me that what could evolve, or ultimately to help me to become an Individual as a Man should be; or, in the terminology of Gurdjieff, for Man to become 'harmonious'—is really a help that comes into one then at the time

when 'I', being already a little bit grown up, needs a guidance and a judgment which is Objective. This becomes one's Conscience, which then from that time on starts to develop parallel for the formation of one's Consciousness. And the different steps involved in Conscience are again parallel to the possible development of an emotional state in Man which, in Gurdjieffian sense, we call 'Kesdjanian' body, and the intellectual part which Man tries to develop as Consciousness would become his 'Soul.'

I say it is much too much to talk about a variety of the different things that are connected with it. But of course, we can talk a little bit more or a little bit less. It really doesn't matter, because the only time that you actually can find certain things that could become permanent for you is simply to apply what one now knows, and if this description of what is Work is sufficiently clear. Let me repeat. It is an Observation process. It is the intellectual process we've talked about tonight. It is something I call an 'I' to become for me a permanent entity, helping me in my life, ultimately, for which it has to prepare and which has to be fed and which has to grow, and can only be dependent on—and I can be dependent on—that when it is sufficiently full grown to have, as 'I', an ability to remain Objective, even when it is in contact with me in an unconscious state.

My subjectivity, being on a lower scale and a lower plane, will be affected by anything from Above or what is on a higher plane. For me, light is worth more than darkness. I call 'darkness' the state of unconsciousness; even if I am a little bit waking-asleep, it still has the characteristics of sleepness ... or being asleep in daily life, and the difference between that and actually Waking Up is the difference between my unconscious state having a mind which functions on Earth—and quite well—as compared to a mind which actually could function in an Objective sense and is destined to remain in existence after one's death and which has, as principle attribute, understanding instead of knowledge.

The question of feeling is solved fairly easily by saying that the feeling ought to change into an emotional state, and that the emphasis of an emotion is not on me but is on God so that then a Man finds his place in the rest of the universe as far as his own life is concerned; then, connected with the totality of all life existing in whichever way he feels this without being able to express it or formulate it in a particular kind of a word or a sentence, but that what goes by feeling and when it is emotionally tinted and gradually becomes deeper and deeper and more intense, will finally reach within a Man that what he is in reality and then, in himself, he will

meet God in his Magnetic Center.

That what Man is interested in is to uncover that what really is he himself. And I say it is his 'Magnetic Center,' but of course it does mean it is life. The daring and the wish to be able to express it can only take place when all the different attributes of one's body which now prevent it—or the coating or that what is protective coat, or that what prevents any possible penetration into that what is my inner life—can be, you might say, 'pierced' in some way, that it reaches that what is essentially much more value to me. And the pity is always that in ordinary life we never really hear about it, and when you go to church you don't hear the doctrine anymore—you hear only dogma and certain rules in accordance with which you would have to live. And when you read the Bible, you get stuck on the Ten Commandments and you don't even know what is meant by 'sleep,' even if that word is used in the Bible, and you don't know how to read it because there is no concordance in connection with it.

This kind of principle is applicable in ordinary life at any one time; this is the requirement; you remember, we said that God must be there if, in Infinity, there is no possibility that He could not be there, because He must be Omniscient and Omnipresent, and Omnipotent. That what is 'I', in any kind of condition in existence, will become Omniscient about myself, and will give my Conscience Omnipotence and will actually give me the totality of that what I need in this life regardless of how subjective I am—provided there is a sincere wish that I want to grow. And that Work on myself simply means the application of ideas now connected with Objectivity in order to produce within myself something, you might say, I can 'stand' on and build on as a rock, where that what is Kesdjanian or Soul body will not as easily be destroyed when the winds and the rains and all the rest of my death comes to me.

We can talk next week more in detail. But you see, I'm stuck when you don't ask. Because when you ask, I know what you want. This time I will have to talk about this—perhaps in detail, perhaps a little bit too flowery here and there, that you have missed the boat by not understanding what is meant by Work on oneself—but I think it is clear enough to know what is involved: the creation of something that is Objective to you, and it keeps on Observing you as if, when you walk, that there is something with you that is separated from you, or at least is functioning separate in your brain as an entity separated from the rest of mental functioning and which has only one particular quality, which is to be Objective regarding you as you walk or as you wash dishes or as you make a bed or as you talk or as you have a posture of a certain kind or

any movement you might make, that that 'I' constantly remains Observant of you and records facts about you and accepting you as you are, without any wish to change you.

This will give you the foundation of Work, and if you want to try it, try it and find out that it is difficult; and find out that perhaps you do not understand it; and find out that there may be questions and obstacles and then find out what is an answer to these kind of practical questions in the application of a religion which could become the philosophy of your life if you actually want to commit yourself to the possibility of trying to do something that is worthwhile.

During this lifetime one has to prepare for one's death. And if you are interested in this life and the preparation for your death which ultimately will come, maybe during such preparation you can profit of knowing how to live in this life more efficiently, more really to the point, more emotionally and more like a Man should live this life; and not in an unconscious state and die like an animal, but that he actually could die willingly, giving up his body in order to stay for that body on Earth and to return to dust, but that that what he really is, that that continues to live in whatever particular place may be assigned for him in accordance with a holy law.

I hope to see you next week, same time on Monday.

Good night, everybody.

End of Tape